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VS. APOCALYPSE
SINISTER

--WITH
PHOENIX
AND THE
BEAST
CAUGHT IN THE
MIDDLE!

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X-MEN
OCTOBER

SPECIAL
EVENT

X-MEN 95[®]

THE HEIR TO
APOCALYPSE[™]
VS. SINISTER

--WITH
PHOENIX
AND THE
BEAST
CAUGHT IN THE
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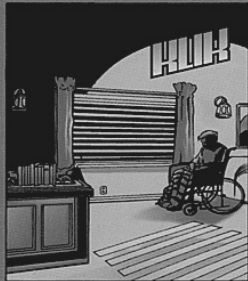
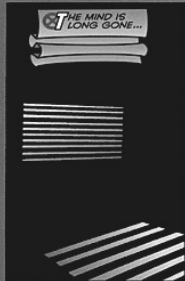
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UPSTATE NEW YORK...
THE CATSKILLS...

... WHERE HANK MCCOY -- KNOWN
AS THE X-MAN BEAST -- HAS COME
SEEKING REFUGE FROM THE XAVIER
INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER LEARNING.

MUCH HAS GONE
WRONG FOR THE
X-MEN -- AND
THE WORLD --
OF LATE.

THE EXISTENCE OF THE
LEGACY VIRUS -- FATAL
TO HUMANS AND MUTANTS
ALIKE -- WAS REVEALED
ON NATIONAL TELEVISION...

... BY HANK'S
ONE-TIME FLAME,
TRISH TILBY.

NOW, RELATIONS
BETWEEN MUTANTS
AND HUMANS HAVE
REACHED A FEVER
PITCH...

... AND
BOTH
WILL
SUFFER.

ON TOP OF ALL THAT,
HANK'S CLOSEST FRIEND,
BOBBY DRAKE -- THE
MUTANT ICEMAN --

-- HAS DISAPPEARED
TO PARTS UNKNOWN
WITH THEIR TEAMMATE,
ROGUE.

BUT NOT ONLY IS HANK
MCCOY AN X-MAN AND
WORLD-RENOUNDED
BIO-GENETICIST...

... HE IS ALSO AN
UNRELENTING
OPTIMIST.

AND SO, HE SEEKS
SOLACE IN HIS OWN
UNIQUE FASHION...

GRRRRRMOOOO!

A SINISTER HEART

J. M. DEMATTEIS
RALPH MACCHIO
Story

TERRY DODSON
& JOHN PAUL LEON
Pencils

JON HOLDREDGE
& SHAWN MARTINBOROUGH
Inks

RICHARD STARKINGS
& COMICRAFT
Letters

MIKE
THOMAS
Colors

MARK
POWERS
Editor

BOB
HARRAS
Chief

NOW WHAT
BROUGHT THAT
NATIVE-AMERICAN
NAME TO MIND,
METHINKS?



IS
IT A SIMPLE
RE-ENACTMENT
OF CHILDHOOD
FRIVOLITY --



-- OR THE
SPONTANEOUS
EXPRESSION OF A
DEEPER YEARNING TO
RETURN THIS FURRY
BOD TO THE FOREST
PRIMEVAL?



HEAVY
THINKING,
HENRY...



... TOO HEAVY
FOR SUCH A
SPLENDIFEROUS
SETTING!

WHAT
TO DO THEN,
AS THE PALE
MOONLIGHT
GLINTS OFF THE
SWIRLING
SURF?

WHY, ACT --
YOU HIRSUITE HAMLET!
ACT, AND ACCEPT THE
CONSEQUENCES OF
THINE ACTIONS!

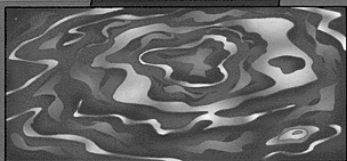


ONCE AGAIN,
THE INVOCATION
OF THE ONCE
WARRIOR-
CHIEF!



GERRON MOO!





GOHHH!

PLUSSHH

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WELL, THAT'S AN EIGHT-POINT-NINE ON THIS JUDGE'S SCORECARD!



THEN, MAY I SO TIMIDLY SUGGEST THAT YON JUDGE CONSIDER A PAIR OF EYEGLASSES? 'T WAS A TEN FOR SURE!

AS YOU WISH, SIR. BY THE WAY, HAVE I TOLD YOU HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS UP HERE?



BOBBY AND I USED TO COME UP TO THIS CABIN ON WEEKENDS -- DOUBLE-DATES AND THE LIKE. THAT'S WHY I PURCHASED IT.

BUT NOW, WITH HIM ON THE RUN*, I FELT A NEED TO HAVE YOU, SCOTT, AND WARREN MAKE THE SOJOURN.

SEE CURRENT ISSUES OF UTILITY AND PITCH FOR DETAILS -- Mark.



HMPH -- SOUNDS LIKE THE BIG CHILL TO ME, HANK.

HADN'T CONSIDERED THAT KASDAN CLASSIC WHEN MAKING UP THE GUEST LIST.

AND I HARDLY INTENDED TO SNUB THE NEWER X-MEN. SORRY I --



NOTHING TO BE SORRY FOR, HANK. I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS PERFECTLY.



NO MATTER
HOW MANY BONDS
WE FORGE WITH
STORM OR GAMBIT
OR JUBILEE...

... WE FIVE
WERE THE ORIGINAL
X-MEN -- BACK WHEN IT
WAS ALL SO MUCH SIMPLER.
THERE ISN'T A REASON IN
THE WORLD WE SHOULDN'T
GO OFF NOW AND
AGAIN...

... REMINISCE
AND RE-ESTABLISH
OUR ROOTS -- OUR
CONNECTIONS TO
ONE ANOTHER.

COULDN'T
HAVE PUT IT
BETTER MYSELF,
MILADY JEAN.



WHAT SAY WE HEAD
FOR THE GREAT
INDOORS WHILE
THE GETTING'S
GOOD?

BE
RIGHT
WITH YOU --



-- SOON AS
I SECURE OUR
LITTLE BASKET
FROM ANY
WAYWARD
ANTS.



COME
BACK SOON
TO US,
BOBBIE
BOY...



... THE
OLD GANG
MISSES YOU
SOMETHING
AWFUL.

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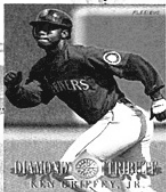
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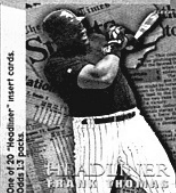


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THE CARLYSLE
NURSING HOME.

SAN DIEGO,
CALIFORNIA...





SHE
SEEMS TO
HAVE *VANISHED*.
HASN'T SHE?
POOR OLD MISS
LIVINGSTONE.

SHE
MEANS QUITE
A BIT TO YOU,
DOESN'T
SHE...

SINISTER?

JUST A
MOMENT,
MY DEAR!

—HUK—

YOU DON'T
MIND IF I *KILL*
HER? YOU'RE A
COLD-HEARTED,
MANIPULATING
ANIMAL.

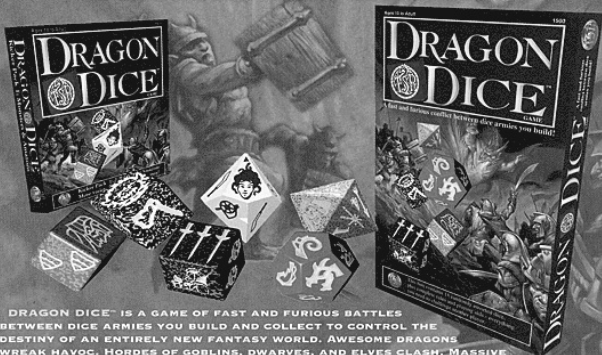
ALL YOU
CARE ABOUT IS
YOUR PRECIOUS
RESEARCH. TRACING
BLOODLINES.
MANIPULATING THE
MUTANT GENE
POOL.

**K
R
A
K**

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"DEATH, NATURE'S NEMESIS, CREATED HIS OWN RACES TO WREST CONTROL OF THE ELEMENTAL POWERS, THE MOREHL, OR LAVA ELVES, WORSHIPED FIRE AND DESTRUCTION. THE TROGS, A GOBLIN RACE, SPANG FROM EARTH AND CORRUPTION. FROM THE INSTANT OF THEIR CREATION, FIERCE CONFLICT ENVELOPED THE WORLD. HORDES OF SELUMARI, VAGHA, MOREHL, AND TROGS SWEEP ACROSS THE LAND IN ENDLESS BATTLE, USING THEIR ELEMENTAL MAGIC TO WREAK HAVOC AND SUMMONING DRAGONS TO TURN THE TIDES OF WAR."



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NO
FURTHER
NEED FOR
MASQUERADE,
THEN.



IF
THERE IS
A POINT TO
THIS DISPLAY,
GENESIS...

... I
SUGGEST
YOU REACH
IT!

EVERY YEAR YOU COME
TO THIS NURSING HOME
TO VISIT THE OLD WOMAN,
LIVINGSTONE.

WHY,
SINISTER?

TELL
ME,
WHY?

AND IF
YOU VALUE THE
PITIFUL CHARRADE
YOU ARE
LIVING...

... YOU
WILL TELL ME
WHERE YOU'VE
TAKEN HER!

SINISTER'S
MOTIVES ARE
HIS OWN,
PRETENDER.

SLAM
M
M
M

PRETENDER?
COULD A PRETENDER
LEAD THOSE WHOM
APOCALYPSE ONCE
COMMANDED?

COULD
ANY BUT HIS
ONE, TRUE HEIR
HOLD IN HIS
THRALL --

THE DARK
RIDERS

LIFEFORCE

HURRICANE

GAUNTLET

DEADBOLT

SPYNE

AND THIS -- I
TOOK THE LIBERTY
OF MANIPULATING
HER GENETIC
STRUCTURE.

IT WON'T
LAST, BUT I
THOUGHT SHE
MIGHT...

...JOG YOUR
MEMORY.

FAYE.

FAYE LIVINGSTONE...
AS SHE WAS DECADES
AGO.

YOU TREAD ON
DANGEROUS
GROUND,
DAYSPRING.

WE'LL SPEAK
AGAIN,
SINISTER.
HARDORIVE --
TELEPORT.



"SEEING HIM AGAIN --
I RECALL... IT WAS LOS
ANGELES IN THE 1930'S.
THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS.

"YOU'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED
THE COUNTRY WAS IN THE
GREAT DEPRESSION... NOT
THE WAY TINSLETOWN PUT
ON PARTIES.

"I WAS THERE. AT THE
TIME, I WAS A POPULAR
RADIO COMEDIENNE...
SECOND BANANA ON
THE TOP-RATED BUCK
BURNS SHOW.

"I LOVED THE
GLAMOUR OF
IT ALL."

SO, WHAT DO YOU KNOW
OF OUR MYSTERIOUS
HOST, LUCILLE?

WE'VE
MET, BUT I
KNOW ONLY
RUMORS,
FAYE.

HE'S A COUNT OR AN
OVERTHROWN PRINCE.
A FORMER GENERAL
IN THE GERMAN ARMY.
HE'S A MUNITIONS
MAKER...

...A
WOMANIZER,
OR ALL OF THE
ABOVE.

SOUNDS
POSITIVELY
FASCINATING!



AND I BELIEVE I JUST HEARD THE VOICE OF OUR HOST.



GOOD EVENING TO YOU ALL. I TRUST THE MUSIC AND REFRESHMENTS HAVE BEEN ADEQUATE.

WHAT AN ENTRANCE! GABLE'S GOT NOTHING ON HIM!



PARDON ME -- I SEE SOMEONE I MUST SPEAK WITH.

OF COURSE, MISTER ESSEX.



AH, MY DEAR LUCILLE. GOOD OF YOU TO COME.

ARE YOU ENJOYING MY HOSPITALITY?

O-OF COURSE, SIR.



EXCELLENT, AND I CAN SEE YOU'VE BROUGHT A COMPANION.

WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE.



FAYE LIVINGSTONE, MAY I PRESENT MISTER NATHAN ESSEX.

CHARMED, MADEMOISELLE.



"I WAS CAPTIVATED... UTTERLY
CAPTIVATED! I WAS WHOLLY,
SOLELY HIS --

"--COMPELLED TO
BECOME PART OF HIS
INCREDIBLE WORLD...
ME, A SINGLE JEWISH
GIRL FROM BROOKLYN.

"THEN, ONE
NIGHT..."

Mmmm...
NATHAN...?

I-IS
THAT YOU
MOVING
AROUND OUT
THERE?

"IT HAS TO BE A DREAM!
I TOLD MYSELF. THE MAN
I LOVED, ENTERING A
SECRET PASSAGE?"

"BUT THEN I FELT
A COOL BREEZE
FROM THE OPEN
DOORWAY..."

"...AND I KNEW
IT WAS REAL.

"EVERY FIBER
OF MY BEING
SAID TO RUN,
TO FLEE.

"INSTEAD, I
FOLLOWED..."

... LIKE HE
WANTED.

SOME
KIND OF LIGHT
UP AHEAD, AND
THERE'S
NATHAN!

BUT
WHAT ARE THOSE
GROTESQUE THINGS
IN THE CAGE? WHAT
HAVE I STUMBLED
ON?

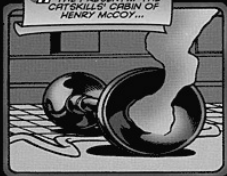
NATHAN --
WHAT IS
THIS?

FAYE.

OH
GOD! Y--YOUR
FACE -- YOUR
SKIN!

WHAT
ARE
YOU?!

A NOTHER NIGHT --
THE PRESENT... THE
CATSKILLS' CABIN OF
HENRY MCCOY...



HANK --
REALLY! NOT
WITH YOUR
FEET!

I'D
LIKE TO EAT
SOME OF THAT
POPCORN,
TOO!

TCH, TCH!
MAY I INFORM
YOU M'DEAR, THAT THE
PEDAL EXTREMITIES ARE
FAIR MORE SENSITIVE
THAN THEIR FINGERED
COUNTERPARTS.

WHY, A
RECENT PIECE
IN THE *AMA*
JOURNAL OF
MEDICINE CLEARLY
CONFIRMED --

OH,
BALONEY,
BEAST!

AW,
KERNELS, KERNELS
EVERYWHERE... AND
NOT A ONE TO
EAT...



WHOOOPS!



...WITH
MY
FEET!

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ENOUGH
FUN FOR ONE
DAY, HANK. THINK
I'LL TURN IN.
G'NIGHT.

G'NIGHT,
SWEET PRINCESS.
AND FLIGHTS OF
ANGELS, ETCETERA,
ETCETERA...



IT'S GOOD
TO SEE JEANNIE
HAPPY... CONTENT.
SHE AND SCOTT...
WHAT THEY'VE BEEN
THROUGH!

BUT THEY'VE
SURVIVED -- AND
THEY'RE TOGETHER.
HUSBAND AND WIFE...
DEEPLY IN LOVE.

AND
WHERE DOES
THAT LEAVE THE
BOUNCING
BLUSHING
BEAST?



ALWAYS
MORE COMFORTABLE
WITH PAGE AND PRINT
THAN GENUINE FLESH
AND BLOOD...

... MAYBE
THAT'S WHY I
TOOK TO MY FIRST
LOVE -- VERA --
SO QUICKLY.

SHE
WAS A
LIBRARIAN,
FOR PETE'S
SAKE!



SO
HANDSOME
HANK, ISN'T HE
THE MOST
ELIGIBLE
BACHELOR IN THE
WESTERN
HEMISPHERE?

I'VE GOT
THE PITTER-PATTER
OF L'L RAINDROPS
FOR COMPANY -- AND
PLATO'S REPUBLIC FOR
A LIGHT LITERARY
SNACK.

LIFE IS
GOOD.

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KEEN!



AVAILABLE AUGUST 1995





NOT IF LIFEFORE DRAINS
THE CONSCIOUSNESS FROM
YOU PSYCHICALLY!

NOW
THE ONLY
DISTINCT
POSSIBILITY
IS YOUR
IMMINENT
DEFEAT!

--UNNH--

THAMMMMM

NO! TAKE YOUR
BLASTED HANDS
OFF ME --

-- AND
GET OUT
OF MY
MIND!

THWAK



AN
EXCELLENT
EFFORT - JEAN
GREY - BUT
FUTILE BECAUSE
YOU ARE BEING
REMOVED FROM
HERE...

... AND THERE
IS NOTHING
EITHER OF YOU
CAN DO ABOUT
IT!

HARD DRIVE --
TELEPORT!

THAMMMMM



JEAN!

TOO
LATE.

JEANNIE'S
GONE. HER AND
SCOTT'S LIFE
VIOLATED...

... AGAIN.



AND
I COULDN'T
PREVENT IT.
STILL, STANDING
HERE IN THIS
RAIN ISN'T
GOING
TO --

Huh?

IT'S JEAN/
A *SPARK* OF HER
CONSCIOUSNESS...

... A PSYCHIC
TENDRIL, QUICKLY
FADING.

SHE'S
TRYING TO
REACH ME... I
KNOW IT. A
BREADCRUMB ON
THE ASTRAL
PLANE...



... AND
THIS LITTLE
HANSEL IS GOING
TO FOLLOW IT
RIGHT TO THE
SOURCE.

BUT, WHAT
IS THE SOURCE?
GRANTLET MENTIONED
"THE HIGH LORD" --
COULD HE BE TALKING
ABOUT APOCALYPSE?
I SHOULD ALERT
THE X-MEN --



-- BUT
THE TRAIL IS
DISSIPATING. I'VE
GOT TO FOCUS ON
JEAN... LET HER
BE MY BEACON.

I CAN
ALERT MY
TEAMMATES
EN ROUTE -- BUT
I WANT FIRST
CRACK AT THE
CULPRITS!

PTSSSSSSSS



THE DESTINATION OF A DETERMINED HANK MCCOY IS A DECAYING MANSION NESTLED IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS...

... A MONUMENT TO DECADENCE THAT ONCE BUSTLED WITH VIBRANT LIFE, NOW FALLEN INTO RUIN THESE MANY YEARS SINCE ITS OCCUPANCY BY ONE NATHAN ESSEX.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT, DAYSPRING? WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT JEAN GREY TO THESE DECEPT SURROUNDINGS?

IT IS ALL PART OF THE PLAN, SINISTER.

YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT PLANS, FEINTS WITHIN FEINTS, PATTERNS WITHIN PATTERNS...

THEY'RE PAYING LITTLE ATTENTION TO ME, I'LL TEST THESE BARS TELEKINETICALLY...

... SEE IF THEY CAN BE PRIED APART.

THAT CELL WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE AN ENERGY FEEDBACK TO ANY PSYCHIC ASSAULT ON IT.

THE PAIN MUST BE EXCRUCIATING... BUT LET THIS UNPLEASANTNESS NOT INTERRUPT OUR DISCUSSION.

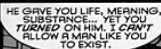
I AM NO LONGER TYLER DAYSPRING -- I REJECT MY FATHER AND HIS WAYS!

I AM GENESIS...

... AND THE FUTURE IS MINE TO SEIZE!

I WILL DO THAT WHICH EN SABAH NUR COULDN'T...

... DESTROY THE OBSTRUCTION CALLED SINISTER!



HE GAVE YOU LIFE, MEANING, SUBSTANCE... YET YOU TURNED ON HIM. I CAN'T ALLOW A MAN LIKE YOU TO EXIST.



I INTEND TO **BREAK YOU** A PIECE AT A TIME... FOR TRUE DESTRUCTION MUST COME FROM THE **INSIDE OUT**.



AND FAYE LIVINGSTONE IS AN IMPORTANT KEY TO WHAT'S INSIDE YOU.



KEEP TALKING DOWN THERE -- GIVE ME TIME TO SLOWLY BUILD UP THE TELEKINETIC PRESSURE ON THESE BARS...



...BRING ABOUT AN OVERLOAD AND EXPLODE THE CAGE!



PAIN -- OVERWHELMING! BUT I CAN'T STOP NOW! MUST -- UHHH!



THEY'RE W-WEAKENING -- YES! JUST -- A -- FEW -- MORE -- SECONDS -- AND --



A VERY IMPRESSIVE ESCAPE! I DIDN'T THINK *ANY* AMOUNT OF PSIONIC FORCE WOULD SHATTER THOSE BARS.



I'LL TAKE MY BOWS ON THE WAY OUT, GENESIS! BUT FIRST I'VE BUSINESS WITH YOU TWO!



ONE MORE STEP, Ms. GREY, AND THE OLD WOMAN WILL DIE.

I'VE SURPRISED YOU *ONCE* THIS EVENING... CARE TO TRY FOR *TWO*?

I CAN TAKE YOU DOWN AND SPARE HER. YOU KNOW IT...

...AND I KNOW IT.



NO! I'LL NOT HAVE THIS! LET ME NEAR HER.



SHE'S DAZED -- DISORIENTED... BUT CONSCIOUS.

HER EYES... STARING AT ME... THROUGH ME.



HER MIND IS ELSEWHERE -- SOMEWHERE IN THE PAST, I'D IMAGINE.



SOMEWHERE YOU ARE SHOCKED TO HAVE COME TO.



"I WAS TERRIFIED.
HE LOOKED *INHUMAN!*"



"BUT HE LIFTED
ME GENTLY..."



"... AND CARRIED
ME BACK TO HIS
BEDROOM, WHERE
HE SAID IT WAS
TIME FOR THE
MASK TO COME
OFF..."

"... AND THE
TRUTH BE
TOLD."



"HIS WORDS WERE THE
RAMBLINGS OF A
MADMAN. HE SPOKE OF
A DEAL WITH THE *DEVIL*..."

"... AND SAID I CARRIED
THE '*X-FACTOR*' IN MY GENES."

"MY *OFFSPRING*
WOULD PRODUCE
SPECIAL CHILDREN..."

"... CHILDREN THAT
WOULD BE *MORE*
THAN HUMAN."



"IT WAS *HORRIBLE*
BEYOND IMAGINING."



"WHETHER HE TRULY LOVED ME
MATTERED LITTLE. I HAD BEEN
SEDUCED BY A MONSTER WHO
CRAVED MY GENETIC PATTERN."

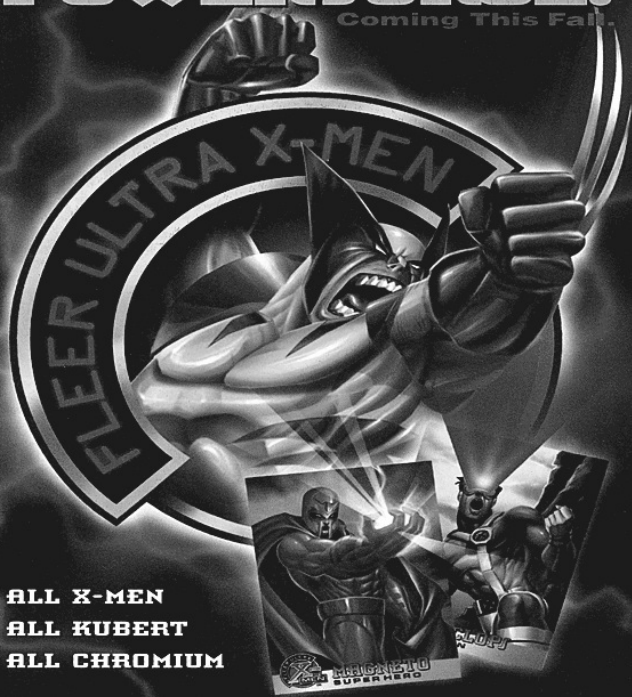
"HE *KNEW* THAT THESE
REVELATIONS WOULD
END OUR RELATIONSHIP --
HE *MUST* HAVE!"

"WHAT PERVERTED SATISFACTION
COULD HE HAVE GAINED FROM
WATCHING MY REACTIONS?"

"HE *REFUSED* TO
RELEASE ME. I
BECAME HIS
PRISONER..."

CHROMIUM POWER SURGE!

Coming This Fall.



ALL X-MEN
ALL KUBERT
ALL CHROMIUM

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"... THOUGH I WOULD
NOT SURRENDER
EASILY.

"I CRAVED MY
FREEDOM LIKE
ANY CAGED
ANIMAL!



"BUT NO MATTER
HOW DESPERATELY
I POUNDED...

"... MY PLEAS
FELL ON DEAF
EARS.



"TIME PASSED.
HE USED ME...
MANIPULATED
ME... IN EVERY
WAY POSSIBLE.

"FEIGNED
CONTRITION
WAS FOLLOWED
BY DEGRADING
EXAMINATIONS.



"AFFECTED PITY
GAVE WAY TO
FOUL CONTEMPT.



"AND ALWAYS
HIS COLD EYES
STUDYING ME.





"I CAN ONLY GUESS
WHAT THOUGHTS
PASSED THROUGH
HIS HEAD."

"HE HAD AT LAST *BROKEN*
ME IN MIND AND SPIRIT...
MADE ME -- NOT LET ME --
MADE ME SEE BEHIND THE
ILLUSION THAT WAS
NATHAN ESSEX."

"WAS IT SIMPLY
MY GENETIC MAKE-
UP HE PRIZED... OR
SOMETHING *MORE?*
I FELT SO -- BUT
NEVER KNEW."



"THEN, IN THE MIDDLE
OF A RAGING STORM
ONE NIGHT, AFTER WHAT
SEEMED LIKE WEEKS, HE
FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR --
AND RELEASED ME."

"NOT A SINGLE WORD
DID HE SPEAK, OR
GESTURE DID HE MAKE."

"AND I RAN INTO THE
BLESSED DARKNESS
THROUGH THE PELTING
RAIN AND HOWLING
WIND --"



"-- TURNING *ONCE*
TO LOOK BACK."

"HIS FACE WAS
EXPRESSIONLESS.
THE GLACIAL
WHITENESS SEEMED
MORE PRONOUNCED
THAN EVER I HAD
SEEN IT."

"THE SIGHT *CHILLED*
MY SOUL... STAYED
WITH ME THESE
SIXTY YEARS."

THE PRESENT...

...AT THE GROUNDS
OF SINISTER'S
CRUMBLING ESTATE...

ATTAGIRI,
JEAN -- THE PSI-
CONNECTION'S
GROWN STRONGER --
WITH ONE RATHER
JARRING
INTERRUPTION.

SHE'S
HERE, AND IT'S
UP TO YOURS
TRULY TO EFFECT
A REDOUBTABLE
RESCUE
ALONE --

-- WHILST
THE REMAINING
X-MEN ARE
OTHERWISE
OCCUPIED.

STRANGE
HOW NON-
EXISTENT ARE
ANY INTRUDER
ALARMS OR
WATCHFUL
SENTRIES.

VERILY,
MY INGRESS
SEEMS ASSURED,
IF ONLY --

-- GADZOOKS!



NOW,
NOW, LADS -- ONE
GNOME AT A TIME!
SIRRAHS, IN LIEU OF
AUTOGRAPHS WOULD
YOU ACCEPT
PERSONALIZED
FUR BALLS?

I SEE/
PERCHANCE AN
ALL-EXPENSE PAID
PASSAGE TO ALL
THE TRANSYLVANIAN
HOT SPOTS -- FROM
VLAD DRACUL'S PAD
TO THE
BURGOMEISTER'S
BUMP AND
GRIND?



ALAS,
I DO SEEM TO
BE STRIKING OUT
WITH MY MANY
GESTURES OF
MUNIFICENCE!

AND
SPEAKING OF
STRIKING -- I
SEE OUR LITTLE
BALCONY
BALLET --



-- IS ABOUT
TO REACH ITS
LESS THAN
COMFORTABLE
CONCLUSION!

WHOOF!



SUCH CARING --
SUCH CAMARADERIE!
YOUR CONCERN FOR MY
WELL-BEING BRINGS
A TEAR TO MINE
EYE! ~SNIFF~

BUT
NEXT TIME,
GENTLEMEN --
SOME
MOUTHWASH,
PLEASE!

HANK MCCOY STRUGGLES
BITTERLY AGAINST THE
SWARM THAT RAKES AND
TEARS AT HIM...

... BUT SEEMINGLY,
THEIR NUMBER IS
TOO GREAT.

AND EVEN AS
HE IS ENGULFED
BY THE ALL BUT
MINDLESS
CREATURES, HE
FEELS NOT ANGER
TOWARD THEM...

... BUT PITY.

FOR THEY ARE
BUT PLAYTHINGS
FOR SINISTER.

HOW, THE BEAST
THINKS, CAN A
MAN HOLD SO
MUCH POWER...

... HAVE SUCH
INSIGHT INTO LIFE...

... AND TWIST IT
SO COMPLETELY?



LOOK
AT
THEM!!!

... THE
PERFECT
COUPLE, I
AM SURE
OF IT.

YOU SEE,
ONCE I LEARNED
OF YOUR ANNUAL
VISITS TO THE
CARLYSLE NURSING
HOME, SINISTER,
I KNEW I HAD
DISCOVERED YOUR
ONE, FATAL
WEAKNESS.

LIFEFORCE
WAS ABLE TO
SIPHON OFF
PIECES OF THIS
HAG'S MIND.

ONLY
FRAGMENTS
REMAINED...

... BUT IT
WAS ENOUGH
TO CONVINCE ME
THAT THERE EXISTS
A PROFOUND BOND
BETWEEN YOU
TWO.

A
CONNECTION
THAT GOES FAR,
FAR BEYOND
GENETICS.



I WILL
FORCE YOU TO
ADMIT THAT WHAT
YOU FEEL FOR THIS
DESSICATED SHELL
IS LOVE!

FOR A
CREATURE
SUCH AS YOU
CANNOT EXIST--
CANNOT STAND
ABOVE HUMANITY,
USING AND
MANIPULATING
OTHERS...

... ONCE HE'S
ADMITTED TO
HIMSELF THAT
HE FEELS
LOVE!

AND WHY
AM I HERE?
WHAT PART AM I
TO PLAY IN YOUR
DEMENTED
LITTLE
GAME?



I WANT YOU TO CREATE
A MIND-LINK BETWEEN
SINISTER AND THE OLD
WOMAN. HER MIND IS
WEAK... RIDDLED WITH
CANCER. SHE HAS ONLY
WEEKS TO LIVE.

THE
FUSION WILL
FORCE HIS DEEP
FEELINGS TO THE
SURFACE --

-- AND I
WILL HAVE
BROKEN
HIM!

ACCEDE
TO THIS... AND
I WILL LET
YOU GO.

I'LL DO NOTHING OF
THE KIND! IF YOU TWO
WANT TO DESTROY
EACH OTHER, GO
AHEAD...

... WITH MY
BLESSINGS.



BUT I
WON'T BE A TOOL
IN YOUR PERSONAL
WAR. I'M LEAVING --
AND I'M TAKING
THIS WOMAN
WITH ME.

NO...!



... I
DEMAND
THAT YOU
DO IT!

DON'T
RAISE YOUR
VOICE TO MY
FRIEND...!



OH MY
STARS AND
GARTERS!

YOU CAN'T
IMAGINE WHAT I
WENT THROUGH
TO GET HERE!
THERE WERE
WRONG TURNS,
TRAFFIC --

-- A
VERITABLE
ARMY OF
LITTLE NASTIES
NOW RESTING
PEACEFULLY
IN THE
COURTYARD!
SUCH
TRAVAILS!

BUT AS
YOU CAN SEE,
I'VE HELD BODY AND
SOUL TOGETHER LONG
ENOUGH TO MAKE MY
EBULLIENT *APPEARANCE*
HERE AT THE LOONEY-
TUNES LAB!

SO, FRIENDS
AND NEIGHBORS,
WITHOUT FURTHER
ADO --

-- A FEAT OF DAZZLING
DERRING-DO TO LEAVE
ALL AND SUNDRY
VIRTUALLY AGAPE!

OKAY,
JEAN, HERE'S
THE PLAN. YOU
TAKE OUT
THOSE
TWO...

... AND
I'LL RESCUE
THE LADY!

THANKS
FOR ALL THE
HELP.

THESE RIDICULOUS ANTICS CHANGE
NOTHING! IT'S ALL BRAVADO.
YOU HAVE *NO CHANCE* AGAINST
THE *BOTH* OF US.

ULTIMATELY,
THE PRETENDER
HERE WOULD
FAIL --

-- BUT I WILL
HAVE MY WAY. I
ALWAYS DO. SO
WHY NOT GIVE US
ALL THE
TROUBLE...



... AND
DO AS I SAY.
LINK MY MIND
WITH HERS AND
LET US BE DONE
WITH IT.

I
DON'T
THINK
SO.



I'M
ENCASING HER
IN A PSI-FIELD --
AND WE ARE
LEAVING!

Hmmm...
SOMETHING
DECIDEDLY
AMISS IN
THAT AWFUL
VISAGE.

COULD
IT BE?

COULD
IT TRULY
BE?

YOU ARE
LOWERING
HER
GOOD.



AND I'LL LEAVE
YOU WITH A LITTLE
CLEAN-UP JOB TO
KEEP YOU
BUSY.

KEESH



DO NOT
GO!

MORE
ORDERS?



YOU MUST LISTEN
TO ME, GENESIS
AND I MUST PLAY
THIS OUT.



JEANNIE --
LISTEN, DO AS
HE SAYS... DO
THE MIND
LINK.

WHAT?
HANK, I'M THE
TELEPATH, AND I
CAN'T READ THIS,
HOW CAN YOU...?

CALL IT
ANTHROPOID
INTUITION,
BUT I KNOW
THIS IS IMPORTANT.
YOU KNOW
ME BETTER THAN
ALMOST ANYONE,
JEANNIE, SO
PLEASGE...

... TRUST
ME.

NOTHING
SNEAKY,
SINISTER --
OR YOU'RE
TOAST!





YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A WAY
TO SAY GOOD-BYE... TO MAKE
AMENDS FOR THE CRUEL
WAY YOU TREATED ME.
IT'S SO... SWEET.



YOU KNOW, AFTER
I FLED FROM YOU --
AFTER THE INTENSITY
AND THE HORROR
OF OUR
RELATIONSHIP...

... I NEVER
MARRIED.

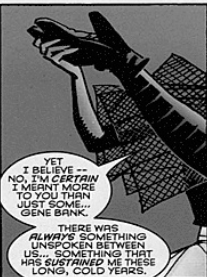


AND... I
DIDN'T HAVE
ANY CHILDREN,
OF COURSE.

THE CHILD
I WAS TO GIVE
BIRTH TO... THE
PERFECT OFFSPRING
YOU WERE SO EAGERLY
ANTICIPATING --



-- WILL
NEVER
EXIST.
BECAUSE
OF YOU,
MY LOVE.



YET
I BELIEVE --
NO, I'M CERTAIN
I MEANT MORE
TO YOU THAN
JUST SOME...
GENE BANK.

THERE WAS
ALWAYS SOMETHING
UNSPOKEN BETWEEN
US... SOMETHING THAT
HAS SUSTAINED ME THESE
LONG, COLD YEARS.



I'M FACING
DEATH NOW.
I CAN'T HOLD
ONTO THE
PAIN AND
RAGE AND
GRIEF ANY
LONGER.

BUT IN
THESE LAST
MOMENTS...
I'VE REALIZED
SOMETHING.



DESPITE
ALL YOU DID
TO ME... THE
EXPERIMENTS...
THE MANIPU-
LATION...

... YOU
FAILED. YOU
TRIED TO USE
THE LOVE THAT
EXISTS IN US
ALL TO REACH
INSIDE ME...



... AND TAKE WHAT YOU WANTED.
ULTIMATELY, HOWEVER, I DID
THE SAME.

FOR I
TOUCHED
SOMETHING
DEEP, DEEP
WITHIN
YOU.



LIVE
WITH THIS
KNOWLEDGE,
BELOVED...



AND
AS FOR
YOU --

PLEASE/
NO NEED FOR
RAW THREATS,
MY DEAR
SINISTER.

YOU
HAVE PROVEN ME
WRONG. I'VE FAILED...
FAILED TO CRACK
THAT SILVERY
STONY FACADE.

YOU
REMAIN THE
MASTER. YOU MAY
EXIT UNHINDERED
BY ME OR THE
DARK RIDERS.

I WAS INDEED ILL-
PREPARED FOR THIS
CONFRONTATION...

... PRAY
YOU ARE AS
FORTUNATE
IN THE
FUTURE.

I WILL
DEAL WITH
HIM IN MY OWN
TIME... AND IN
MY OWN
WAY.

GO NOW,
X-MEN. WHATEVER
BATTLES LIE AHEAD...
THERE IS NONE TO
BE FOUGHT HERE
TONIGHT.

WHAT IS
IT YOU WISH
TO SAY?

HANK MCCOY, FOR
ONCE, CANNOT
FIND THE WORDS.

FOR DEEP IN HIS
HEART, HE'D
SENSED ANGUISH
IN SINISTER.

HAD KNOWN FAYE
LIVINGSTONE HAD
MEANT SOMETHING
TO HIM.

IN THAT SINGULAR
MOMENT, HE CAN
ONLY REACH OUT
IN EMPATHY...

... FOR SINISTER
HAS SURELY
LOST TODAY.

MOMENTS
LATER...

LET'S GO,
JEANNIE, AND TAKE
THIS POOR WOMAN
BACK WHERE SHE
BELONGS. LEAVE
US DEPART WITH
ALACRITY --

-- A GREAT
DEAL OF
ALACRITY,
LADY FAIR!

BUT
WHY, HANK?
WHAT DID YOU
SAY TO
SINISTER?

NOT WHAT I SAID,
MADAME -- THE
LOOK I SAW
IN HIS EYES.

HE WAS
CLOSING THE
BOOK ON THIS
EPISODE OF HIS
CHECKERED
PAST --

-- AND IN
DOING SO,
SEALED HIS
ULTIMATE
DOOM.

AND YOU
GOT ALL THIS
INFORMATION AND
INSIGHT JUST BY
LOOKING INTO
HIS EYES?

OF
COURSE BEATS
TELEPATHY EVERY
TIME!

HENRY
MCCOY, YOU
JUST MIGHT BE
ON TO SOMETHING
THERE!

GENESIS
THOUGHT BY
PROVING SINISTER
CAPABLE OF LOVE,
HE'D BE EXPOSING A
MORTAL WEAKNESS.
AND SINISTER
APPARENTLY
SHARED THIS
VIEW.

THEY WERE
WRONG. AS TRITE
AS IT SOUNDS, JEANNIE,
OUR TRUE STRENGTH
DOESN'T COME FROM
MUTANT ABILITIES...

... BUT FROM
LOVE. AND WHEN
SINISTER REJECTED
THAT...



WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED TO SINISTER? ALREADY PLANNING HIS NEXT LITTLE ESCAPE AGAINST THE X-MEN?

Hehehehe... I'D WAGER DOLLARS TO DOUGHNUTS HE'S NOT DOING *ANYTHING* AT THIS MOMENT, JEAN.

NOT ONE SINGLE THING.



A DRAMATIC -- PERHAPS EVEN MELCDRAMATIC FINALE TO OUR DUEL. STILL, PREDICTABLE.

BUT YOU DID NOT DISCOVER THE *WEAKNESS* YOU HOPED TO FIND. HE REVEALED NOTHING TO US.

NOT TRUE. IN NOT SHOWING *WEAKNESS* -- HE STILL DISPLAYED MUCH OF HIS CHARACTER TO HIS ADVERSARY.

AND THAT KNOWLEDGE CAN BE USED *AGAINST* HIM NOW. I HAVE LEARNED MUCH ABOUT THIS MAN.

AND THAT THOUGHT WILL SURELY *TORMENT* HIM TILL NEXT WE MEET.

BUT NOW ON TO MY NEXT PROJECT -- THE X-MAN CALLED WOLVERINE/®

SEE WOLVINE'S OWN MAP -- Mark.

THE BEAST'S CABIN,
MID-MORNING...

WELL,
LOOK WHO'S
FINALLY
DROPPED IN...
SCOTT AND
WARREN.

WHAT
HAPPENED HERE,
JEAN -- HANK? IT
LOOKS LIKE A
BOMB HIT THIS
PLACE!

BOMB? YOU NOTICE
ANYTHING,
JEANNIEP?

LOOKS
OKAY TO
ME.

ARE
YOU TWO
BLIND?

WARREN, WHAT
SAY WEE? IF THE CATFISH
ARE JUMPIN' -- AND I'LL SHOW
YOU WHOSE OCULAR
FACULTIES ARE IMPAIRED,
PAL O' MINE!

Mmm... LET'S *REALLY* BRING
THE HOUSE DOWN, SILLY --
THEN WE'LL WORRY ABOUT
CLEANING IT UP,
OKAY?

WELL,
LOOKS LIKE
IT'S JUST US
TWO AT A BIG LOG
CABIN IN THE
WOODS. NICE,
HUHP

YEAH --
A BIG MESSY
CABIN IN THE
WOODS. LET'S
HELP CLEAN
IT UP.



Words

SCOTT LOBDELL
WITH MATT IDELSON

Story

RAMON
BERNARDO
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P. CRAIG
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RICHARD STARKINGS
(AND) COMICRAFT
Letters

MIKE
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MARK
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BOB
HARRAS
Chief

... SO I
SAID TO HIM,
"WHY SHOULD
I CARE?"

S'AROUND
HERE
SOMEWHERE.

AND HE
SAYS, "IF YOU
DON'T, WHO
WILL?"

HARDOCK,
YOU SAID,
RIGHT?

BRADDOCK.
THE NAME IS
BRADDOCK.

RIGHT, RYAN
BRADDOCK --
I REMEMBER.

SO I
SAID, "IT JUST
DELIVER THE MAIL,
I DON'T WRITE
IT!"

BRIAN,
MY NAME
IS BRIAN
HARDOCK.

HEY, WHO'S
TELLING THIS
STORY -- YOU
OR ME?

MISTER
MCGRULLY, PLEASE.
I HAVE TO BE
SOMEWHERE BY
THE TURN OF THE
CENTURY --

-- AND I'D
LIKE TO READ
MY SISTER'S
LETTER SOME
TIME BEFORE
THAT.



HERE YOU GO!
I FOUND --

?!
-WHULP-
NOPE.

SORRY, MY
MISTAKE.

THIS IS
FOR BRIAN
BRADDOCK.



THAT IS
ME, I AM
BRIAN
BRADDOCK.

Oh.
HERE
YA GO.



KNEW
I'D FIND IT,
LAD. I'VE NOT
LOST A LETTER
IN FORTY
YEARS --

-- OR MY
NAME ISN'T
ROB
McCAULLY!

I'LL TAKE
YOUR WORD
ON BOTH
MATTERS.

GOOD
DAY, SIR.



THERE
WAS A
TIME --



-- I WOULD'VE
USED MY ENHANCED
STRENGTH TO TURN
THAT POST OFFICE
UPSIDE-DOWN AND
SHAKE ELISABETH'S
LETTER FREE.

BUT SINCE
MY... TRIP...
PATIENCE
SOMEHOW
COMES
EASIER.

AS CAPTAIN BRITAIN, HE WAS
AWASH ON A CHRONAL WAVE FROM
EXCALIBUR 100 TO 75 - Mark.



TO BE
HONEST, IT'S
PROBABLY THE
WHOLE REASON I
EVEN KEEP THIS
PRIVATE POST OFFICE
BOX HERE ON THE
SCOTTISH
MAINLAND --

-- INSTEAD OF
FORWARDING ALL
MY MAIL DIRECTLY
TO THE MUJI
ISLAND RESEARCH
FACILITY.

BETWEEN
TRAVELING FROM
ONE END OF THE
TIME STREAM TO THE
NEXT, OR FIGHTING
EVIL MUTANTS --

-- OR
LIBERATING GENE
PENS IN GENOSHA, OR
JOINING EXCALIBUR ON
ONE MISSION OR THE
NEXT...



... IT'S
REFRESHING TO
DO SOMETHING
SO COMPLETELY,
SO REFRESHINGLY,
SO BLESSEDLY...

... NORMAL.



OF COURSE, IT
IS A LETTER FROM MY
CLASSICALLY BRED
ENGLISH SISTER -- A
HYBRID OF TWO WORLDS --
WHO DEVELOPED MUTANT
POWERS AND EVENTUALLY
LOST HER OWN BODY...

... AND LATER HAD HER
CONSCIOUSNESS MERGED
WITH A CHINESE PSION AND
UNDERWENT JAPANESE
NINJA TRAINING.

ELISABETH BRADDOCK
RURAL ROUTE
GLASGOW, SCOTLAND



SO NORMAL MIGHT
BE TOO LIBERAL A
TERM.

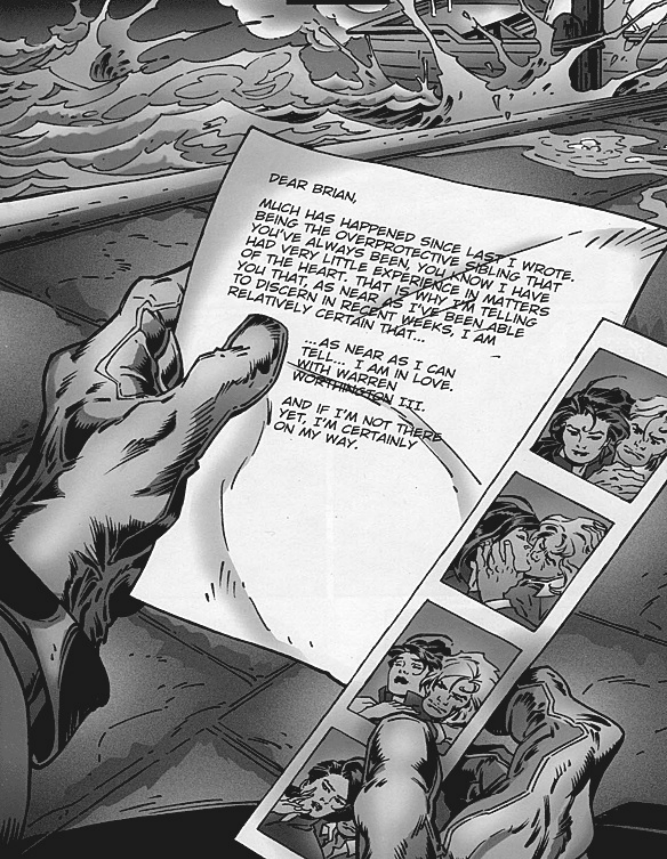
BUT SHE'S
FAMILY, I'M
ALLOWED.



SHRIMP

SO COME
ON, ELISABETH
BRADDOCK.

GROUND
ME.



DEAR BRIAN,

MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE LAST I WROTE. BEING THE OVERPROTECTIVE SIBLING THAT YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN, YOU KNOW I HAVE HAD VERY LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN MATTERS OF THE HEART. THAT IS WHY I'M TELLING YOU THAT, AS NEAR AS I'VE BEEN ABLE TO DISCERN IN RECENT WEEKS, I AM RELATIVELY CERTAIN THAT...

...AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL... I AM IN LOVE. WITH WARREN WORTHINGTON III.

AND IF I'M NOT THERE YET, I'M CERTAINLY ON MY WAY.









PLEASE, WARREN. THIS IS ALL SO NEW TO ME. TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.

I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE HOW TO SAY THIS. I WOULD NEVER WANT TO HURT YOU IN ANY WAY.

I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE YOU'D NEVER DO THAT.

I SUPPOSE IN MANY WAYS, I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS. MAYBE I WAS MORE INTERESTED IN FINDING SOME COMPANIONSHIP... ANY COMPANIONSHIP... THAN IN FINDING YOU.



IN THE BEGINNING, IT SEEMED SO EASY --

-- LIKE WE WERE FOLLOWING THE SCRIPT OF A SOAP OPERA, BUT THAT WAS ALL IT REALLY WAS -- A SCRIPT.

YOU KNOW, LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT, AND ALL THAT. BUT SOMETHING FUNNY HAPPENED ALONG THE WAY -- AT LEAST TO ME --



AND YOU DID. I DON'T THINK I EVER TOLD YOU HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR HELPING ME THROUGH MY PERIOD OF... REVELATION.

... ALL I WANTED WAS TO MAKE YOUR PAIN GO AWAY.

THE FUNNY THING WAS, REACHING OUT TO YOU MADE ME FEEL GOOD. I REALIZED HELPING YOU REGAIN YOUR SOUL WAS STARTING ME DOWN THE ROAD TO RECLAIMING MINE.



SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT YOUR ORDER IS READY.

THANKS. ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND.

WITH A GORGEOUS GUY LIKE YOU WALKING AWAY? HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO THAT?



A TOAST
TO YOUR
PURITY MY
LADY OF
BLADES.

OH, I
DO BELIEVE
I'M GOING
TO FAINT!

BE
SURE TO
CATCH ME
WHEN I FALL!
MY WINGED
CHAMPION!



SERIOUSLY,
BETSY, DOES
ANY OF THIS
MAKE ANY SENSE,
OR AM I JUST
SPOUTING
NONSENSE?



NO, OF COURSE YOU
AREN'T. WE'VE BOTH BEEN
THROUGH SO MUCH, MORE
THAN ~~ANYONE~~ SHOULD
HAVE TO DEAL WITH...
ALONE.

TO WAKE
UP ONE DAY AND
FIND THAT MUCH OF
YOUR EXISTENCE IS
BASED UPON
A LIE...

SUCH AN
EXPERIENCE
CAN BE VERY...
VIOLATING.

BELIEVE
ME, I KNOW WHAT
YOU MEAN. EVEN AFTER
I MANAGED TO PURGE
THE INFLUENCE OF
APOCALYPSE, I STILL
FOUND THAT I DIDN'T
KNOW MYSELF
ANYMORE.

IT'S BAD
ENOUGH TO BE
ALONE. LOSING
YOUR SENSE OF
SELF IS INFINITELY
WORSE.



PERHAPS THAT WAS WHAT
DREW US TOGETHER? TWO
LOST SOULS, LOOKING
FOR A LITTLE LIGHT? AT
FIRST, I WANTED TO
BELIEVE IT WAS MORE
THAN THAT...

... BUT AT
SOME POINT I
REALIZED THAT
THAT WAS ALL
WE HAD ...
SIMILAR BACK-
GROUNDS.



AND
NOW...?

I'M... NOT SURE. EVERY TIME
I START TO GET A HANDLE ON
THE SITUATION, MY FEELINGS
JUST GROW STRONGER...

... BUT I'M
NOT QUITE
SURE WHAT THE
NEXT STEP IS
SUPPOSED
TO BE.

EVEN THOUGH OUR
WORDS SEEMED
FINALLY TO BE MOVING
TOWARD THE
FEELINGS WE WERE
HOLDING INSIDE...

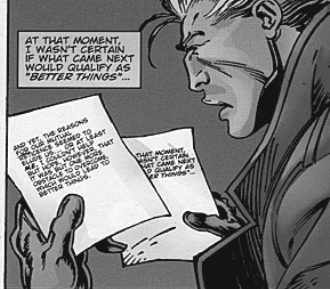


... STILL A NAMELESS
FEAR HELD US BACK.
IT WAS AS IF GIVING
VOICE TO THOSE
EMOTIONS WOULD
CAUSE THEM TO
SHRIVEL UP AND
DISAPPEAR.



AND YET, THE REASONS FOR OUR MUTUAL RETICENCE SEEMED TO ELUDE US... OR AT LEAST ME.

I COULDN'T HELP BUT HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS BUT ONE MORE OBSTACLE TO OVERCOME, WHICH WOULD LEAD TO BETTER THINGS.



AT THAT MOMENT, I WASN'T CERTAIN IF WHAT CAME NEXT WOULD QUALIFY AS "BETTER THINGS"...

AND YET THE REASONS FOR OUR MUTUAL RETICENCE SEEMED TO ELUDE US... OR AT LEAST ME. I COULDN'T HELP BUT HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS BUT ONE MORE OBSTACLE TO OVERCOME, WHICH WOULD LEAD TO BETTER THINGS.

THAT MOMENT, I WASN'T CERTAIN IF WHAT CAME NEXT WOULD QUALIFY AS "BETTER THINGS"...



I DON'T KNOW, BETTS, I'M A LITTLE AFRAID OF FACING THE SAME HURT THAT MANY OF OUR FRIENDS HAVE.

AFTER ALL, MEMBERSHIP IN THE X-MEN DEMANDS A LOT OF SACRIFICES...

... ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO MATTERS OF THE HEART.

YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT, DO YOU?



DIDN'T SCOTT AND JEAN FIND TRUE HAPPINESS?

HA! ONLY AFTER PUTTING UP WITH THE EQUIVALENT OF THIRTY YEARS' WORTH OF OBSTACLES AND MISERY. HECK, JEAN'S APPARENT "DEATH" WAS WORTH TEN YEARS ALONE!

THE POINT IS, THEY BELIEVED IN THEIR LOVE ENOUGH TO OVERCOME ALL THE OBSTACLES THAT FATE PUT IN THEIR PATH.

MAYBE I'M JUST COMPLETELY NAÏVE, BUT I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT IF THE PASSION RINGS TRUE, THEN THE PATH IT TRAVELS UPON IS SECONDARY.



NOT TO BE A CYNIC... BUT I THINK YOU'RE FOCUSING ON THE ONE HAPPY ENDING IN THE GROUP.

REMEMBER HOW WELL THINGS WORKED OUT BETWEEN HANK AND TRISH TILBYP ANOTHER CASUALTY OF THE TIMES WE LIVE IN... THE LIVES WE LEAD.

BOBBY'S FACED ENOUGH FALSE STARTS TO OUTDO THE INDY 500, AND EVEN THE CHILDLIKE LOVE THAT EXISTED BETWEEN KITTY AND PETER IS GONE...

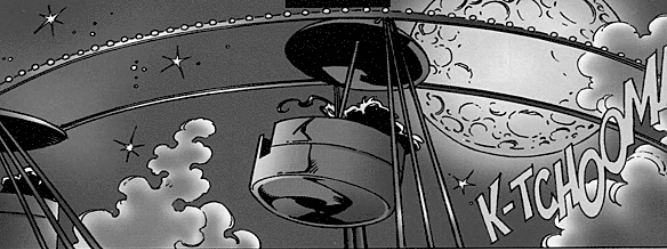
I THINK WE ALL EXPECTED THEY WOULD END UP GETTING MARRIED...

... BUT THOSE FAIRY TALES AREN'T MEANT FOR US.

AND AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO ROGUE AND GAMBIT WHEN THEY ACCEPTED THEIR LOVE...



THEN YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT IS WORTH THE RISK





I CAN'T WATCH!



MAYBE NOT ALL STORIES HAVE TO END THE SAME WAY...



BETTS, IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD GIVE IN TO OUR FEELINGS IF THAT'S WHAT WE WANT TO DO.

I JUST WANT US TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE RISKS BEFORE WE --

NOT TO CHANGE THE CONVERSATION, BUT DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD LEND A HAND TO SOME OF THOSE STRANDED GOERS WHO DON'T HAVE WINGSP

I SUPPOSE WE COULD TRY...



... BUT IT SEEMS LIKE SOME PEOPLE BELONG UP HERE.



AND WE DON'T?

WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE WE BOTH FEEL THE SAME WAY BEFORE WE COMMIT TO ANYTHING... OR WE'LL BOTH END UP GETTING HURT.

I DON'T THINK ROGUE AND GAMBIT REALLY CONSIDERED THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THEIR ACTIONS WHEN THEY ACKNOWLEDGED *THEIR* FEELINGS.

PERHAPS, WARREN, THAT'S THE POINT?



MY POINT IS THAT THEY NEVER REALLY HAD A DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW THEY FELT...

... THEY KEPT ACTING ON EMOTION WITHOUT ANY LOGIC, AND ONLY BROUGHT THEMSELVES PAIN.



LORD KNOWS WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THAT IN OUR LIVES...



YOU
KNOW, FOR THE
FIRST FEW WEEKS
I REALLY WONDERED
WHY I WAS GETTING
INTO THIS WITH
YOU.

WHEN
MY MIND WAS
SWITCHED INTO
THIS BODY...

... I REALLY
STARTED TO LOSE
MY SENSE OF SELF
A LITTLE BIT.
SUDDENLY, I DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT
THOUGHTS AND
DESIRES WERE MY
OWN...

... AND WHICH
BELONGED TO
REVANCHE.

PERHAPS
I JUMPED INTO
YOUR OPEN ARMS
BECAUSE I WANTED
TO CREATE SOME
MEMORIES AND
EXPERIENCES THAT
I KNEW I COULD
CALL MY
OWN.

BUT
YOU HELPED ME
SO MUCH DURING
MY QUEST TO FIND
THE TRUTH ABOUT
MYSELF...

... THAT I
KNEW YOU
CARED FOR ME
AND THAT MADE
ME FEEL...
GOOD.

THAT
COMES FROM
THE HEART.



MY
HEART, AND
YOU PUT IT
THERE.



I GUESS
WE REALLY DO
CARE A LOT
ABOUT EACH
OTHER.



NOTHING
WRONG WITH
THAT.



IN THAT MOMENT, AFTER WE
HAD FINALLY LAID BARE OUR
SOULS AND TOUCHED THAT
UNKNOWN SOMETHING THAT LIES
WITHIN, I BELIEVE WE BOTH
REALIZED THE LIMITLESS HOPE
THAT LAY BEFORE US --

AND THE POTENTIAL FOR
TRAGEDY THAT HAUNTS
ALL WHO DARE TO LOVE --
AND AT LAST CAME TO
ACCEPT THAT RISK.



AND AS WE GAZED INTO THE
GLISTENING EYE OF NATURE,
PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME
WE RECOGNIZED THE FACES
THAT LOOKED BACK, AND OUR
SMALL PART IN IT ALL.





I MAY NOW CONCLUDE, DEAR BROTHER, THAT THE HUMAN BODY IS BUT A SHELL TO HOUSE THE HEART THAT BEATS WITHIN DURING ITS LONG JOURNEY INTO THE NIGHT.



AND IF, ALONG THE WAY, THE ONE SHOULD EVER ENCOUNTER ANOTHER OF LIKE MIND, THEN TRULY, THE WORLD IS A LITTLE BIT BETTER PLACE FOR IT.



WHETHER OUR CONNECTION SHOULD BE FOR BUT A FORTNIGHT, OR FOREVER, I BELIEVE I HAVE AT LAST LEARNED WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE, AND TO LOVE MYSELF AS WELL.



AND FOR THAT, I MAY THANK WARREN WORTHINGTON III, FOR SHOWING ME THE BEAUTY THAT IT IS TO BE ALIVE. AND THIS, BROTHER, IS WHY I BELIEVE I HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE.





AS ALWAYS, I SHALL
COUNT THE DAYS
BEFORE WE MEET
AGAIN, DEAREST BRIAN.
UNTIL THEN, BE WELL.

LOVE ALWAYS,
ELISABETH.



AS ALWAYS, I SHALL
COUNT THE DAYS
BEFORE WE MEET
AGAIN, DEAREST BRIAN.
UNTIL THEN, BE WELL.
LOVE ALWAYS,
ELISABETH.



WELL,
BRAVE SISTER, IT
WOULD APPEAR
THAT YOU HAVE
AT LAST COME
OF AGE.



AND IN THE
PROCESS, YOU
HAVE QUITE
GROUNDED ME
ONCE MORE...



... PERHAPS
IN THE MOST
PROFOUND OF
WAYS.

AS A MEMBER
OF EXCALIBUR, I
SOMETIMES FORGET
THAT RISKING
ONE'S LIFE...

... IS SOMETIMES
LESS DAUNTING
THAN RISKING
ONE'S HEART.



BUT YOU
HAVE REMINDED
ME THE RISK
ITSELF MAKES
IT WORTH
IT...



... AND
MY WORLD IS
NOW A LITTLE
BIT BETTER
PLACE FOR
IT.

THE END

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Searching for life
in outer space...

We never imagined
the consequences
of finding it.

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